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Chinatown-South Cove

District Profile & Proposed 1978-1980 Neighborhood Improvement Program

City of Boston
Kevin H. White, Mayor
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Neighborhood Planning Program

Summer, 1977

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KEVIN H. WHITE
MAYOR

CITY OF BOSTON
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY HALL, BOSTON

The Boston Redevelopment Authority's Neighborhood Planning Program has prepared this report to assist residents and City agencies develop longer range solutions to community-wide planning issues.

This "Neighborhood Profile" contains information which helps bring into sharp focus those matters which are of concern to residents of each neighborhood in the City. This information facilitates public understanding and assists all of us--both at City Hall and in the neighborhood--in determining how we can best use the resources available to us.

I hope this booklet serves as an important building block to encourage greater interest in the problems confronting this neighborhood and our City and help us all in developing solutions to these problems.

Kevin H. White
Mayor

Boston Redevelopment Authority

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The Boston Redevelopment Authority, as the City planning agency, is pleased to submit for neighborhood review a profile of Chinatown-South Cove.

It is my hope that the profile can serve as a starting point in the dialogue that should and must take place between neighborhood residents and public officials as decisions are made about the use of community development funds and other matters of public policy.

The decision-making process, of course, must be based on data that is up-to-date and accurate. I am confident that the material contained in this report can be of great assistance to all who care about this neighborhood in particular and the city as a whole.

Questions and comments about the material in the report should be directed to the Neighborhood Planning staff of the BRA.

Robert F. Walsh
Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority

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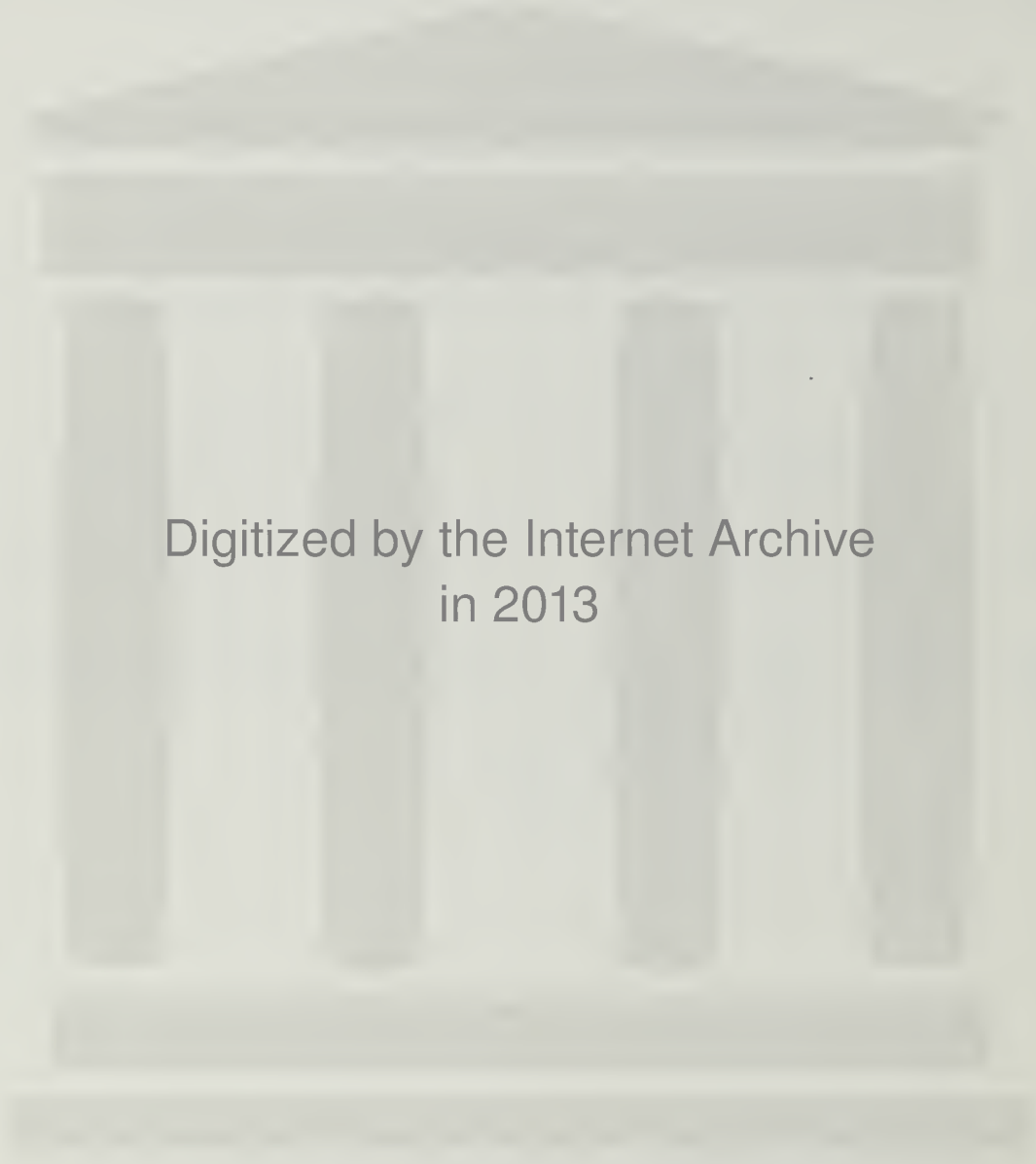
This planning report, prepared by the Chinatown-South Cove Neighborhood Planner, is intended to assist local residents and City officials in defining the needs of, and programs for the Chinatown-South Cove area. It is also written to assist prospective residents and investors with an analysis of current issues facing the community; the report does not describe the positive attributes of the neighborhood.

The report includes background information, a discussion of major community planning and development issues and recommended strategies and is intended to aid in the establishment of a long-range framework for decision making by the public and private sectors.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1. BACKGROUND

A. NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The Chinatown-South Cove community in Boston has developed on land created by the filling of tidal flats on either side of Washington Street. Before the filling, Roxbury neck, a narrow strip of land, connected the original Boston peninsula with the town of Roxbury. The purpose of the filling of the flats, which began in the early 1800's, was to create additional residential real estate. There were essentially two neighborhoods created, Bay Village and South Cove. Development of both began about 1830 and over the years, Bay Village retained much of the scale and character of the original neighborhood. South Cove, on the other hand, declined as a residential neighborhood, the victim of an expanding railroad network whose terminus at South Station diminished the attractiveness of the area to the native American, middle class residents. The latter chose to move farther away from the central city and were encouraged to do this by the technological advances being made in transportation.

The departure of the original residents in the 1840's opened property in South Cove to successive waves of immigrants - Irish, Italian, Jewish, Syrian and finally Chinese. Land values declined as the area became a low rent district and the leather and garment industries were attracted. South Cove was bounded on the south and east by the railroad. Then in 1899 the construction of the elevated line along Washington Street depressed land values still further causing an additional influx of garment manufacturers who razed tenements to make room for the garment industry.

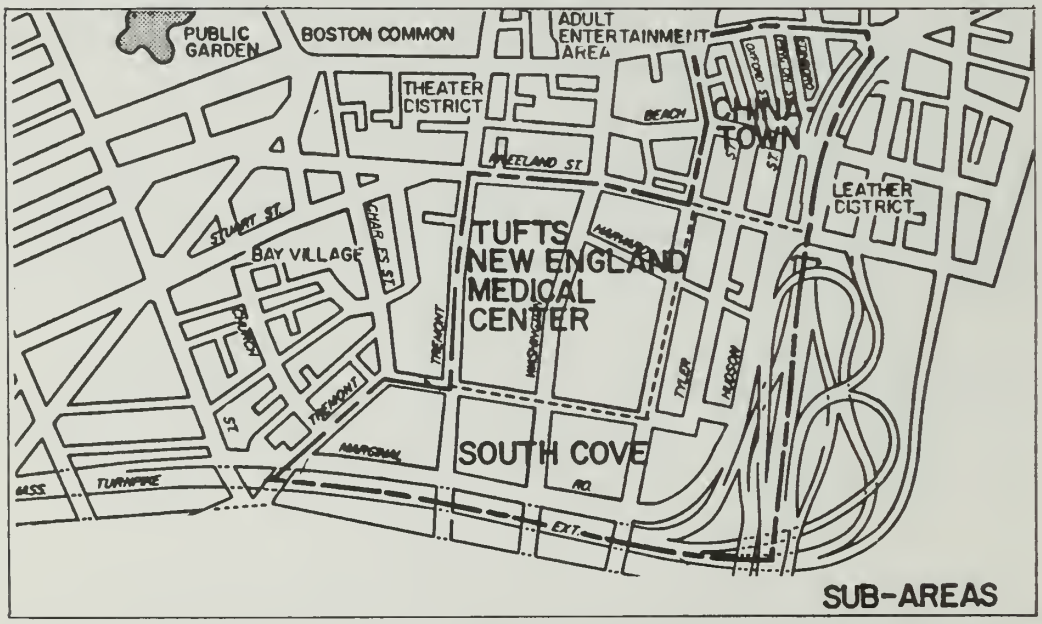
The first Chinese to settle began arriving in the late 1880's. The intent of the first immigrants was to earn a living and return to the homeland. Acculturation did not occur because the Chinese immigrants considered themselves temporary residents and suffered because of a severe language barrier as well as cultural and racial discrimination.

Until after World War II, Chinatown-South Cove was a relatively self-contained community, but gradually, some tenements were remodeled and the first and second floors converted for restaurant use. Chinese restauranteurs began catering, not strictly to the Chinese community, but more to the non-Chinese. A modest tourist industry grew out of this development.

The physical character of Chinatown-South Cove showed a continual decline from 1840 until the late 1960's with the housing stock deteriorating and industries relocating. The construction of the Southeast Expressway and the Massachusetts Turnpike accelerated this decline causing the demolition of many housing units and introducing additional vehicular traffic into the community. Perhaps an even more serious consequence was the radical separation the highways created between the Chinese community in the South End and that in the South Cove.

In 1965, the South Cove Urban Renewal Project was initiated with its goals to provide for the orderly expansion of the Tufts-New England Medical Center, to further the vitality of the entertainment district and to preserve and expand the two residential neighborhoods, Bay Village and South Cove. Not all of the Chinese community was included in the South Cove Urban Renewal Project. A section north of Kneeland Street was omitted. In accommodating the expansion needs of Tufts-New England Medical Center and in order to replace the dilapidated tenement housing south of Kneeland Street, the urban renewal project resulted in the demolition of many structures and the displacement of much of the Chinese community. With few relocation opportunities in Chinatown-South Cove, many of those displaced reluctantly moved to the South End, Mission Hill/ Fenway and Allston/Brighton. The urban renewal project changed the scale of the area from one of three to five story rowhouses to a mixture of rowhouses, ten and twenty story housing developments and institutional buildings.

These recent physical changes in the Chinatown-South Cove community have coincided with, but are unrelated to, an increase in the number of immigrants arriving from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The flood of immigrants results from changes in U.S. immigration laws which now have fewer restrictions on Oriental immigration. In the last ten years, more women and children have begun arriving, radically changing the demographic mix in the Chinese community and also creating a demand for additional housing units and services.



Boston's Chinatown is the fourth largest "Chinatown" in the country. In addition to being the place of residence for many Chinese, Chinatown is the focal point for the Chinese community in all of New England. Chinatown-South Cove is a very special neighborhood in the heart of the City. It is important to the City because of its unique character which adds to the diversity of the City and it is a significant tourist attraction.

B. EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic statistics for Chinatown-South Cove are difficult to obtain because the small size of the area precludes its being treated as a single census tract by the U.S. Census Bureau. Surveys conducted under auspices other than the U.S. Census Bureau are not entirely accurate because of the unknown number of illegal aliens residing in the community and the inherent reluctance of many residents to be involved in surveys or information gathering. The statistics used in this profile are from the 1970 Census Information by Blocks and other demographic surveys.

The Chinatown-South Cove residential community (see map) is bounded by the Expressway, Essex Street, Harrison Avenue, Kneeland Street, Tyler Street, Oak Street, Tremont Street and the Turnpike. It is separated from Bay Village, the nearest residential neighborhood, by the Tufts-New England Medical Center which includes the area bounded roughly by Tremont Street, Oak Street, Harrison Avenue and Kneeland Street.

The northern edge of the community contains several large warehouse buildings abutting narrow streets. From Beach Street to the south this neighborhood is characterized by three and four story, brick rowhouse structures with commercial space on the ground floor and in the basements and residential units on the upper floors.

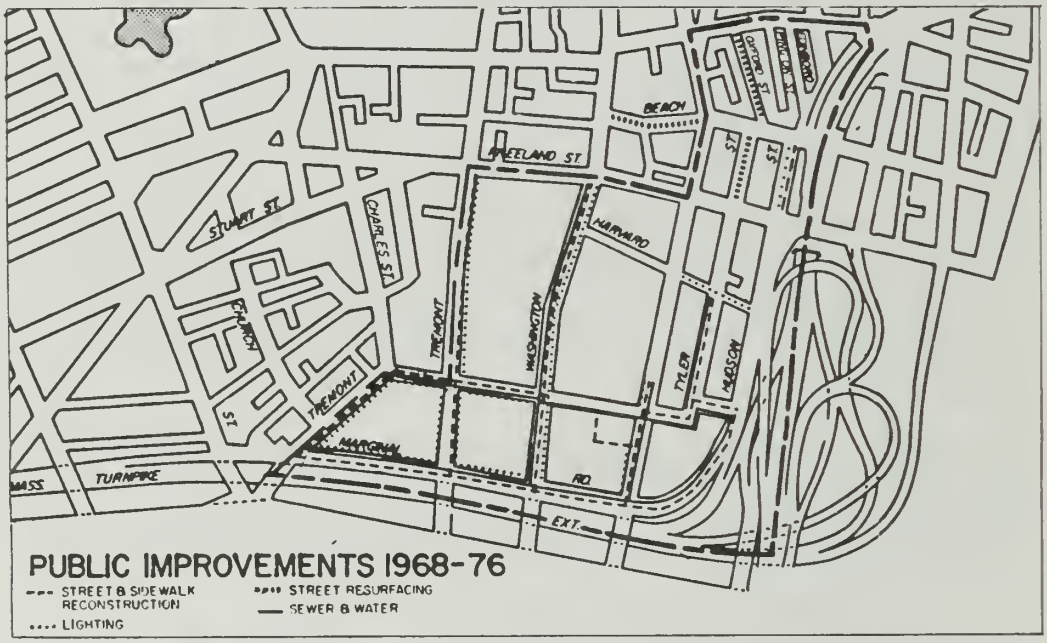
The southern edge of Chinatown-South Cove south of Oak Street has been dramatically changed as a result of the urban renewal program. It now includes the new Mass Pike Towers and Tai Tung Village as well as the new Quincy School and Quincy Towers.

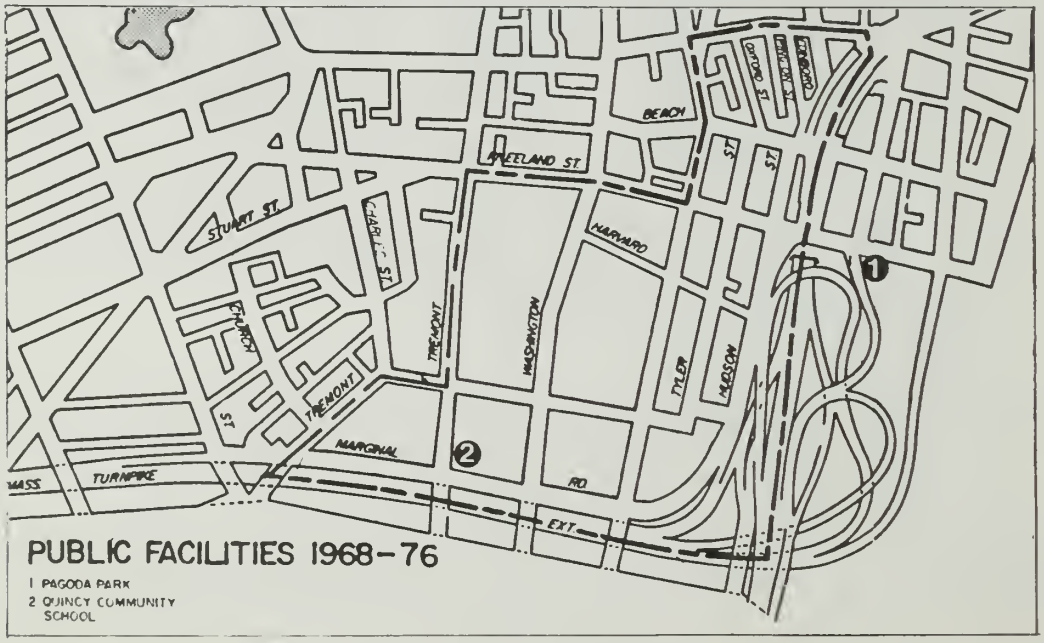
COMPARATIVE STATISTICS - CHINATOWN/SOUTH COVE

Population	South Cove	Beach Street	District	City
Total 1975 (estimate)	1,900	900	2,800	637,986
Total 1970	750	900	1,650	639,657
Change from 1960 to 1975	-400	+200	-200	
Total Chinese 1970	700	900	1,600	
Income				
Median Family	$ 5,100	$ 5,100	$ 5,100	$ 9,133
Percentage of Families with annual income less than $5,000	48%	48%	48%	22%
Housing				
Total Dwelling Units	584	250	834	232,856
Units Needing Rehab in excess of $1,000 (1975)	N/A	50-75%	N/A	67,102
Owner-occupied	N/A	48	N/A	27%

C. PAST MAJOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT (1968-1976)

Capital expenditures in Chinatown-South Cove have been modest in the past eight years and have been concentrated within the urban renewal area (see map). At the time of completion of the project, most streets will have been reconstructed and many will have new utility systems. To date, most project improvements have been in the Bay Village section of the project. Project expenditures for the Bay Village section cannot be broken out so that only totals are available. A total of $3.1 million has been expended in connection with the project up to 1976. Other capital expenditures in Chinatown-South Cove include the construction of Pagoda Park and the recently completed Quincy Community School.





Public effort in housing has been concentrated in the construction of two HUD-assisted developments containing a total of 414 units. The two, Mass. Pike Towers and Tai Tung, are occupied primarily by Chinese-American families. A third, HUD-assisted development which was recently completed is the Quincy Tower complex with 161 units of housing for the elderly located adjacent to the new Quincy Community School.

In addition, 24 units of family housing were rehabilitated with assistance from the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. At present, there are other rehabilitation and new construction proposals being discussed which may be submitted for MHFA and HUD assistance. These include housing for the elderly as well as for families.

D. 1977 PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The 1977 Public Investment Program is designed to provide facilities and services needed to improve the quality of the residential environment in Chinatown-South Cove. Included in the program are some of the public improvements which are part of the South Cove Urban Renewal Project, some human services, and monies for special housing and recreational facility needs.

Housing

The Chinese Economic Development Council has been awarded a grant of $25,000 from CDBG (Community Development Block Grant federal revenue sharing) funds for purposes of preparing detailed engineering studies. These studies are needed to implement a proposal for the residential conversion of some warehouse buildings on Edinboro Street.

Public Facilities

The City has allocated $25,000 in CDBG money to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). These funds will match those provided by the CCBA for the conversion of the Old Quincy School to a community facility. The building will include space for classes and meetings. A consultant, hired by the Public Facilities Department, has been preparing the plans for this conversion. The Chinese Kitchen in the new Quincy School is near completion having been paid with 1976 CDBG funds.

Public Works

A total of $160,420 in CDBG funding has been allocated for sidewalks, lighting and trees on Hudson and Tyler Streets. These improvements are part of the Urban Renewal Program and, there-

fore, only include the area south of Kneeland Street. Additional federal funds amounting to $358,000 will be used for sewer and water work on Harrison Avenue and street reconstruction south of Kneeland Street.

Eighty street lights will be installed on Johnny Court, Maple Place, Tai Tung, Marginal, Oak and Harrison Avenue at a cost of $56,000. CDBG funds will be used for this project. In addition, new street lights are being installed and street resurfacing is programmed for parts of Oxford Street and Edinboro Street and Harrison Avenue from Essex to Beach Street. This work is being carried out with funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce under the Economic Development Administration's Local Public Works Programs.

Human Services

The South Cove Golden Age Center has received $15,000 in CD funds to provide essential services in areas such as nutrition counseling, homemaking, transportation and recreation to elderly citizens in the Chinese Community. This agency is particularly important to the community in light of the language barrier which often prevents elderly residents of Chinatown-South Cove from participating in traditional City of Boston programs for the elderly.

A CD grant of $11,500 has been awarded to the Quincy Community Council, Inc. for a pre-school extended kindergarten. This program will supplement the regular kindergarten program and will offer educational, recreational and social services particularly to immigrant children. It will provide an enriched day care experience for children whose parents are both employed during the day.

Transportation

Work should begin this fall on the South Cove Tunnel Extension Project which is part of the Orange Line relocation. The South Cove Tunnel itself is complete, going from a point just north of Kneeland Street to the intersection of Shawmut Avenue and Marginal Road. The Tunnel Extension Project will extend the tunnel under Marginal Road, the Mass Turnpike, two Boston and Albany railroad tracks, and the Tremont-Arlington Street Bridge. The tunnel will surface along the railroad tracks adjacent to the Turnpike. The cost of this work is estimated to be $42,000,000.

2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES/RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES (Mid and Long-Range)

A. ENCROACHMENT BY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EXPANSION

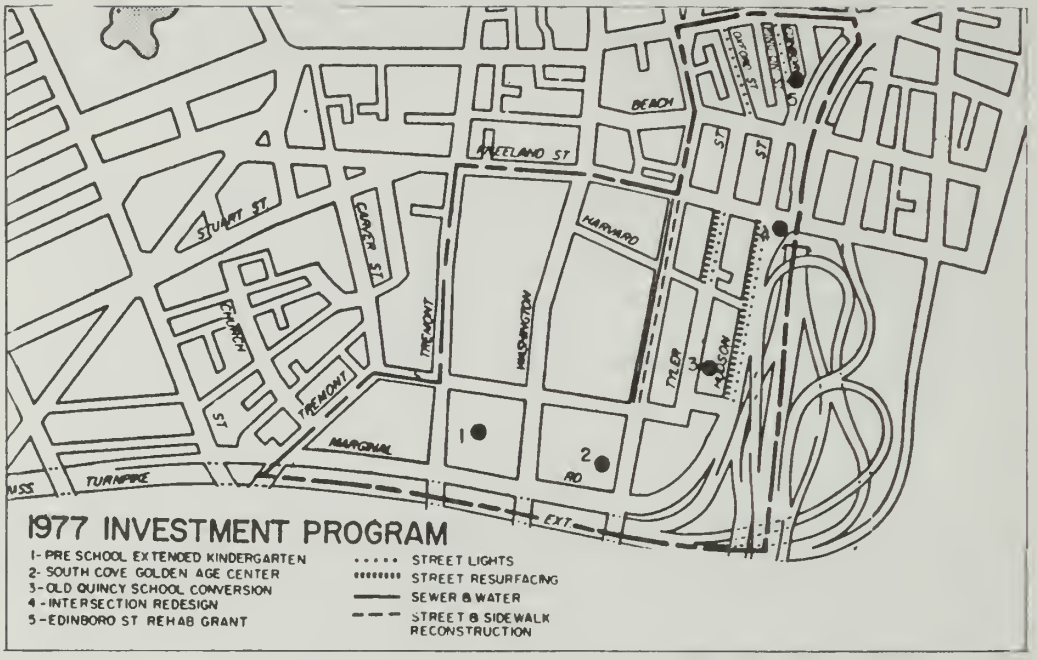
Issue

The Chinatown-South Cove neighborhood is an unusual one in that although it is a residential neighborhood, it is situated near the center of the downtown commercial and entertainment districts. This central location has resulted in severe pressures on the neighborhood in the past and those pressures continue to exist. In order to provide improved access to the downtown core, the State and Massachusetts Turnpike Authority took a substantial portion of real estate which formerly housed the Chinese community. The South Cove Urban Renewal Project resulted in takings for the Tufts-New England Medical complex which also caused displacement of Chinese families and businesses. Recently, several buildings have been put on the market in the entertainment district. There is some uncertainty about the future of that district and with buildings available for sale, there is the possibility of some major redevelopment in that area. Such redevelopment might extend beyond the present entertainment district boundaries. The Park Plaza development and the LaFayette-Jordan Marsh development, as well as development plans current under discussion by the Tufts-New England complex may encourage land speculation in the surrounding areas including the garment district, and land in Chinatown-South Cove may become too valuable for residential use at least at the present density levels. The decline of the garment industry and the high taxes on this property are a further pressure for redevelopment in the area. The loss of the garment industry would have a particular impact upon the Chinese community since it is the major employer of women in the Chinese community and this displacement would result in severe economic hardship for these women who have few alternate employment opportunities.

Continuing growth of the downtown commercial and office core not only causes pressure on real estate in Chinatown-South Cove, but also adds to traffic congestion on streets in the community. Beach Street which is the heart of the Chinese commercial district is clogged by through traffic exiting from the Expressway and approaching the downtown.

Strategy

City officials must continue to analyze development proposals with an eye to the impact of these developments on surrounding communities. The Chinese community should be kept informed of any plan changes in the Lafayette-Jordan Marsh proposal, the Park Plaza plan and of any modifications to the Tufts-New England Medical Center plans.



As part of the Urban Renewal Project a cooperation agreement was drawn up between Tufts and the BRA concerning the dispostion of parcels in the project. When the agreement was prepared in 1966 funds for institutional development were more plentiful than they are today and Tufts prepared an extensive development plan. Some substantial disposition parcels have been set aside to accommodate these plans. In the interim, the availability of financing for such development has diminished and the parcels remain underdeveloped or as parking lots.

The BRA and the City should require the preparation of a master plan for the Tufts health care facilities in the South Cove. This is especially important because of the discussion underway at the Federal level concerning a nutrition center and a school of veterinary medicine within the Tufts medical complex. Tufts should be encouraged either to follow through on their original development plan or to establish a new cooperation agreement which is more consistent with the availability of funds. Such decisions are of concern to the Chinese community since the Tufts/BRA agreement limits the expansion opportunities of that group.

The City should consider a policy of "downzoning" property in Chinatown-South Cove, much of which is presently M-8. The M-8 designation allows industrial use with few restrictions and the allowable floor area ratio is eight times the lot size. The act of downzoning to a less permissive category would be a clear indication to speculators of the City's intention to preserve the residential community in Chinatown-South Cove. This could also reduce some of the pressures on the owners of buildings occupied by the garment industry.

Since downtown and institutional growth pose severe constraints on the expansion of the Chinese community, a strategy should be formulated to improve space utilization within the existing boundaries of Chinatown-South Cove. City officials should work closely with representatives of the garment industry to analyze space requirements, loading needs and truck traffic circulation so that the industry which is dispersed throughout the community at present might be consolidated and made more efficient. This consolidation could result in space being made available for additional housing for the Chinese community.

The City must increase basic services such as the provision of trash receptacles, enforcement of loading zones, and street cleaning in the community so that the Chinatown-South Cove area does not give the impression to speculators of being forgotten. The City should require utility companies to coordinate their underground construction activity so that streets in the area are not continually torn up and clogged with utility trucks.

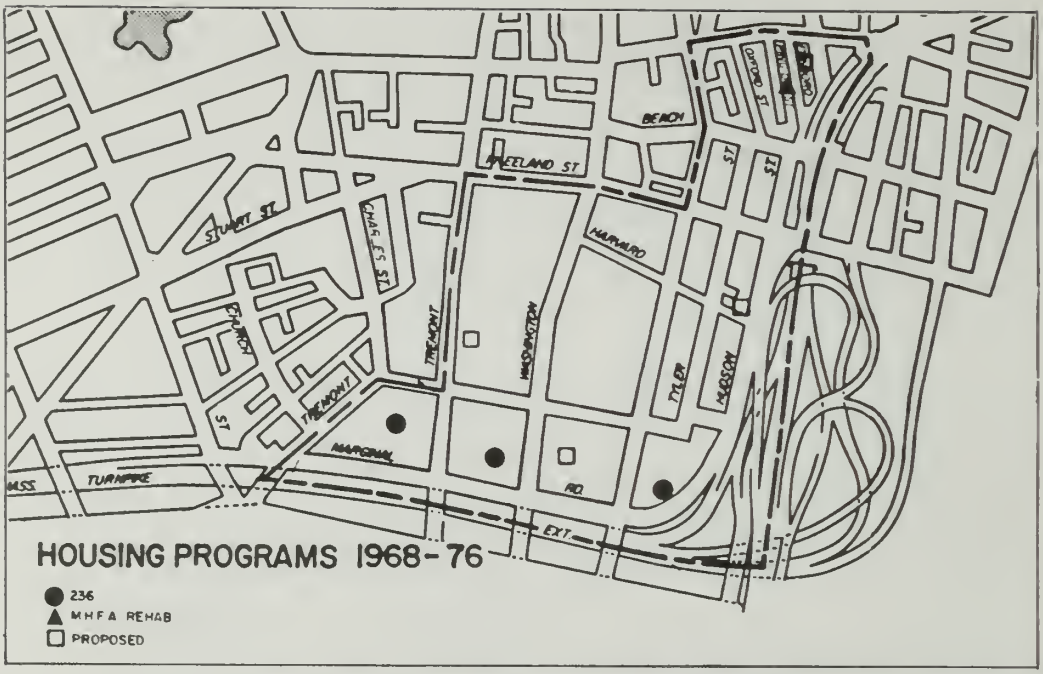
In the past year the Chinese community has been studying the feasibility of expanding into the Leather District. The initial concept was to extend the vertical mix found in the existing Chinatown into the Leather District with commercial space on the ground floor, manufacturing on the second floor and residential above. At the same time, a BRA study called New Neighborhoods Downtown has been analyzing the feasibility and practicality of studio-residential space in underutilized manufacturing and office buildings downtown. In the Leather District, however, residential use should not be confined to artists alone. The owner of a commercial enterprise on the ground floor might live with his family on the upper floors.

There are some design problems associated with the residential units on the upper floors of the Leather District, particularly in locating second means of egress and in the provision of adequate natural light. This would add considerably to the cost of the residential conversion but does not rule out such a development. Expansion towards South Station into the Leather District may be the most appropriate avenue for expansion of the Chinese community in the face of encroachment from Park Plaza, Lafayette-Jordan Marsh, and Tufts.

B. HOUSING SHORTAGE

Issue

The Chinatown-South Cove community experienced the loss of 1,200 housing units with the construction of the Expressway and Turnpike extension and with the growth of the Tufts-New England Medical complex. At the same time, the lifting of U.S. controls on Oriental immigration resulted in the growth of families and individuals



moving into Boston and seeking housing in the Chinese community. The reduced housing supply, the ever increasing demand for units within the community, and the low income which limits housing options of many of the residents have resulted in a severe housing shortage. As a result, within Chinatown, 78% of the units are overcrowded compared with a citywide figure of 8%. The quality of the housing stock is also a problem with 72% of Chinatown's housing considered deteriorated or dilapidated in 1969 compared to the citywide figure of 14%. Even the new housing available in Tai Tung, Mass Pike Towers and in the rehabilitated Chauncy Street apartments does not serve the needs of all the Chinese community because there are so many two bedroom units and the families in Chinatown-South Cove are larger than will fit comfortably in a two-bedroom space.

The current financial difficulties of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) cloud any prospect of new construction or extensive rehabilitation to meet the pressing needs of both families and elderly in the community. Yet the construction of new low-income housing is one of the most pressing public investment needs in Chinatown according to those residents polled in the Survey of Attitudes Toward the City of Boston and its Neighborhoods by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

Strategy

The housing problems of Chinatown-South Cove require a special strategy which reflects the unique nature of this community in relation to the downtown core. It is a community with an average income considerably below that of the City as a whole, yet it is located in a central area with substantial development potential.

City officials should work closely with the Chinese community, particularly the Chinese Economic Development Council, to develop viable programs to convert partially vacant, industrial structures into mixed-use space with housing as one component. One such proposal is the creation of Hong Kong-type condominium units which are less expensive to build and which would find a ready market in the Chinese community. The Hong Kong-type unit is a basic shell in which the buyer-occupant installs his own partitions. Included in this effort to spur recycling of buildings should be a program to provide rent supplements for those low-income families and individuals who are unable to afford the rents charged in newly rehabilitated structures. The City should assemble a package of Federal Section 8 and State 707 monies to do this. Otherwise, new families and individuals, who at present live outside the Chinese community, will move into the newly created units and the existing Chinese community will continue to reside in the same substandard conditions.

The BRA should also encourage joint planning discussions between the Chinese community and Tufts with a goal of joint development of a facility that might provide much needed housing as well as laboratory or library space and parking space for Tufts.

As for the existing housing stock, City officials should develop a program to encourage landlords to rehabilitate existing apartments. It is apparent that the incentives offered under the urban renewal Section 312 loan program were not sufficient since participation was very limited outside of Bay Village. Thus, an innovative program for housing rehabilitation must be developed.

Without the creation of additional units, be it in renovated buildings or new construction, nothing can be done about the overcrowded conditions in the existing housing stock.

QUALITY OF THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

Issue

Although a bona fide residential community, Chinatown-South Cove lacks some basic amenities needed to make the area an attractive, residential setting. It is in the City's interest to have a mixed income population in Chinatown-South Cove and not have this area populated solely by new immigrants and the very poor. However, if the City fails to provide certain basic services and amenities, those in the Chinese community who have the economic wherewithal may choose to move to a more attractive living environment. In the Hart Survey of Attitudes Chinatown residents were optimistic about the future of the City but still had very negative feelings about the lack of City services in their neighborhood. The basic service most noticeably lacking in Chinatown is street sweeping.

Many people would prefer living in close proximity to the shops and community life on Beach Street but the street is generally strewn with papers and debris which is dirty and unsightly. Recently, large drums have been set out on Beach Street to hold the trash so there are no longer overflowing trash baskets, but the debris still remains in the gutters and is a deterrent to the quality of the residential environment. Green open space areas are the most notable amenities missing from the area. The only open space area developed for recreational use is Pagoda Park and access to it is awkward and hazardous since it is separated from the community by the Expressway. The new $600,000 South Cove Plaza is on the edge of South Cove and will be accessible to residents of Mass Pike Towers, but this will not serve the bulk of the Chinatown-South Cove population. The need for a passive recreation area along Beach Street is apparent from the number of people in the Chinese community who meet on the crowded sidewalks for conversation. The Hart Survey revealed that people in Chinatown feel unsafe because of inadequate street lighting. The proximity of Chinatown to the Adult Entertainment District makes better lighting essential. Residents surveyed felt street lighting was a priority item for public investment.

Traffic congestion along Beach Street is a nuisance and can be hazardous as well since emergency vehicles are frequently delayed by traffic snarls. Idling engines of vehicles stuck in the traffic congestion only add to the poor quality of air in this area. The air pollution in Chinatown-South Cove has delayed construction of much needed housing in the past.

South Cove has received some street reconstruction and new sidewalk construction under the Urban Renewal Program, most notably on Washington Street, Harrison Avenue and parts of Hudson and Tyler Streets. However, within Chinatown, there are several examples of sidewalks in hazardous condition. Beach Street, which is the main pedestrian thoroughfare, has sidewalks in particularly dangerous condition and in need of replacement.

Strategy

The newly opened Quincy Community School contains recreational facilities both inside and on the roof which the community is encouraged to use and enjoy. This should relieve some of the need for open space recreation areas. However, the community is particularly anxious to have some green space to offset the very urban, man-made environment in which they live. The proposal to construct the symbolic Gateway on Beach Street and to provide landscaping around it is a sound one but funds in excess of the $40,000 set aside last year are needed to complete this project.

Plans for the construction of the Gateway also call for a narrower right-of-way on Beach Street with a reduction to a width of 22 feet. This reduction in the right-of-way should discourage some

of the traffic coming off the Expressway which uses Beach Street as a by-pass to the downtown area. Thus, the Gateway will not only spur improvements to the primary shopping area in Chinatown-South Cove but it should also reduce some of the air pollution because of the reduction of through traffic. This reduction, however, will not be enough to meet air quality standards of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development when any prospective housing proposals are submitted to them. The City should seek funds to carry out a comprehensive study of air quality in the area and the measures needed to offset adverse air and noise factors on any prospective housing sites in the area. Such a study would eliminate delays in the processing of applications by HUD and would be helpful to prospective developers in determining the economic feasibility of proposals before costly preliminary work is done.

The City, working closely with public and private agencies in the community, including the YMCA, Boys Club, and the Quincy School Council, should prepare a profile of recreation programs and facilities available at present. The comprehensive catalogue would then enable officials to determine areas of unnecessary duplication and the need for any additional programs. Such a catalogue would also be helpful to service agencies, such as the YMCA, which are making dcisions about their physical plants.

The urban renewal parcels R3/R3A at the corner of Harrison Avenue and Marginal Street, the development of which is unlikely in the immediate future, might be made available for recreation space especially in a joint effort by the above organizations. The development of these parcels for housing is unlikely at least until such time as the elevated Orange Line is demolished. The Chinese Evangelical Church which is under construction at the southeast corner of the parcel would not interfere with the development of the remainder of the parcel for recreational use. In fact, the church might be one of the organizations to be included in community review of the park design and also included in any "Friends of the Park" group which would oversee the park after it is constructed.

D. LIMITED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

Issue

Many in the Chinatown-South Cove community are caught in a self-perpetuating cycle of limited job opportunity because of the language barrier. It is estimated that 60-80% of the Chinese population do not speak English. Some of the immigrants arriving are underemployed because of their inability to speak English. They are limited to entry level positions with long hours at minimal

pay even though their education and training qualifies them for better jobs. The long working day makes participation in language classes difficult, so upward mobility is precluded. As a result, the median income of residents in Chinatown-South Cove is $5,100 - lower than any neighborhood in the City.

The restaurant industry is the major employer of men in the Chinese community with 42% of the entire labor force working as waiters, cooks, and general help. However, the restaurant industry is rapidly reaching the saturation point, and soon entry level restaurant positions will no longer be available for the immigrants. A second area of male employment is in laundries, but this, too, offers little upward mobility. Women in the Chinese community are employed primarily as stitchers in the garment industry. This is a declining industry in Boston and cannot be relied upon to absorb new immigrants.

Strategy

The recently formed Chinese Economic Development Council (CEDC) hopes to improve the economic and social well-being of people in the community by assisting them to establish and manage diversified businesses. The CEDC has applied to the Federal Government for designation as a community development corporation (CDC). If funded, the CDC could eventually assist Chinese-Americans to launch new businesses by operating as a venture capital organization.

One business to promote is a Chinese-owned restaurant supply operation. This would not only provide another industry to expand employment opportunities for community residents, but it would also result in better service to the restaurant owners in the community. A second area of business which the CDC should pursue is high technology consulting in science and engineering. This would enable trained immigrants to use their skills and not be confined to entry level jobs.

The City should work closely with the CEDC in their activities and supply the endorsements needed and other kinds of assistance such as tax agreements and identification of sites appropriate for new businesses. The Mayor's Office of Economic Development and Industrial Commission (EDIC) should recruit other businesses into the area emphasizing the central location, proximity to transportation and dependable labor pool. The City should also improve its services such as street sweeping and trash collection and provide better street lighting to enhance the area and encourage additional tourist traffic. This could generate some additional employment in both restaurants and gift shops.

In addition, the City should work closely with the CCBA and CEDC to encourage expanded use of garment and leather district buildings for residential, commercial and manufacturing uses. If programs can be implemented, they will provide both construction jobs and permanent job opportunities needed at present in the community.

In addition to providing technical assistance to the CEDC, the City should continue to work with the private sector citywide to provide on-the-job training programs for students and adults. The City should assist the CEDC in creating a job bank and should make certain that both the Lafayette-Jordan Marsh and Park Plaza developments draw on the local labor supply. This could be effected by having job openings posted on the site.

The critical element, however, is language training. The City, CEDC and other agencies must insure that language training opportunities are available and that residents are impressed with the need to take advantage of them.

3. PROPOSED THREE YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (1978-1980) AND LONGER-RANGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND OBJECTIVES

The proposed 1978-1980 Neighborhood Improvement Program is designed to reinforce Chinatown-South Cove as a total community including residential, commercial and industrial uses adjacent to the downtown. In order to strengthen the community, the City should emphasize activity in three areas including completion of the Urban Renewal Project activities in the South Cove, development and implementation of a comprehensive housing policy and promotion of economic development within the community.

Completion of Urban Renewal Project Activities

As was heretofore stated, the South Cove Urban Renewal Project includes Bay Village. Many of the project improvements, including street and sidewalk replacement, have been completed in Bay Village section of the project area. However, a considerable portion of the planned improvements in the Chinese community in the South Cove have yet to be completed. Some of the work especially on Kneeland Street has been delayed pending the development of Park Plaza. There are two contracts, however, which are independent of the Park Plaza development and for which the City should pursue both state and Federal funds so the projects can be completed at the earliest possible date.

The Urban Renewal Plan calls for sewer, storm drain and water systems work, street and sidewalk reconstruction, traffic control installations, police and fire alarm signals and street lighting for Msgr. Shea Road, Harvard Street, parts of Kneeland, Hudson, and Tyler Streets and Harrison Avenue.

As stated earlier, CDBG funds will be used to do the skimcoating and sidewalk work on Hudson and Tyler Streets and the sewer and water work on Harrison Avenue, but there are no other funds at the present time to do the remaining work. This work is important both in terms of public safety and appearance and the BRA and City should begin now to obtain funds, perhaps from 1978 CDBG urgent needs funds, so these remaining project activities can be carried out in 1978.

The BRA and the City should continue to encourage Tufts-New England Medical Center to expedite their construction program so that under-utilized land now used as surface parking lots is developed providing construction jobs for City residents and permanent employment opportunities for others. The City and the community should work closely with T-NEMC to bring about development of parcel P-2A on Harrison Avenue which would provide apartments above a library facility. These units would help address the serious shortage of housing units in the community. In addition, Tufts should be required to prepare a master plan for its entire health facility in the South Cove.

The BRA should work closely with the Chinese community especially those affiliated with the South Cove Nursing Home, Inc., to determine an appropriate location for a 100-bed nursing home facility in the South Cove. Such a facility is needed to serve the elderly in the Chinese community since language problems and different dietary habits discourage the elderly from traditional nursing home facilities and, therefore, deprive them of some of the medical and emotional support they need.

Public officials and the Chinese community should both encourage cooperation between the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and the Christian Life Church so that parcel R-1 can be developed for the maximum number of housing units which sound site design supports. The quest for financing new construction is difficult enough without intra-community disputes and the development could provide urgently needed, low cost, elderly housing.

The development potential of one of the remaining urban renewal parcels, R3/3A, is questionable because of the presence of the elevated Orange Line which traverses the parcel on its western edge. The relocation of the Orange Line, in connection with Southwest Corridor improvements, will result in the demolition of the elevated railway. However, the state is committed to a replacement service on Washington Street beyond the location of the new South Cove MBTA Station on Kneeland Street. Whether this service will be a trolley line or buses is now under study. The City and the Chinese community should work closely with the MBTA in planning the route alignment since it could affect the size and shape of the R3/3A parcel.

It was previously stated that there are considerable pressures on the Chinatown-South Cove community which threaten to alter the character of the district. Development of Park Plaza, Lafayette-Jordan Marsh, and the Tufts Medical Center outside the community and the very permissive zoning classification within most of Chinatown-South Cove could result in the demolition of existing housing and its replacement by a more intensive use. To prevent this, City officials and residents should initiate efforts to downzone the district to preserve its scale.

The Chinatown-South Cove community is an asset to Boston as a tourist attraction. Recognizing this, the City should work to strengthen the district by first acknowledging its importance as a distinct residential-commercial-manufacturing entity and then seeking to address the severe housing problems which face it today. The Landmarks Commission should be involved in this process.

In the past, the City has tried to apply a standard housing policy citywide. Such a posture has proved ineffective in Chinatown-South Cove. Under the urban renewal project, there were only two Section 312 loans for rehabilitation assistance. There were only four Housing Improvement Program cases with only one completed under the program and HIP was discontinued in Chinatown-South Cove in 1976. These measures, designed to renovate the housing stock, have failed because of the size of the structures, the expense of the work, an inherent suspicion of government programs by the community, and a lack of financial capability. A special program tailored for Chinatown-South Cove must be designed to address the problems of dilapidated, absentee-owned apartments in excess of six units. Incentives for landlords may have to be offered. At the same time, Federal and State subsidies will be needed so that existing tenants can afford to remain in rehabilitated units.

The community has prepared an innovate project proposal to finance the conversion of warehouse structures on Edinboro Street into Hong Kong condominium units. Financial assistance would be made available to enable those with limited incomes to become homeowners. The City should assist the community in preparing this kind of proposal and in seeking financial support to implement such programs.

The use of Federal Section 8 subsidies in any rehabilitation or new construction work may stir up the debate over air quality in Chinatown-South Cove. The City should seek funds from the Environmental Protection Agency for a comprehensive analysis of air quality which would include recommendations to mitigate the effects of air and noise pollution on buildings in the district. This study would be helpful both for obtaining subsidies for existing dwellings and for securing Federal assistance in new construction.

The most significant effect of any housing policy created for Chinatown-South Cove is the legitimacy such a policy gives to the residential area. A necessary follow-up to this recognition is the improvement of basic services which the City generally provides to neighborhoods including street sweeping and trash collection. Furthermore, residents in Chinatown-South Cove deserve additional green areas for active and passive recreation. The proposal for the construction of the Gateway should be implemented immediately and additional funds sought to provide attractive landscaping around the Gateway so that a pleasant green space is available in the heart of the community.

Funds should be set aside for development of an active recreation facility on Parcel R3/R3A. This facility should be designed as a result of coordination between the Quincy School Council, Boys Club, YMCA and Chinese Evangelical Church.

One of the most important objectives of a neighborhood improvement program for the district and of critical significance to the realization of goals of a housing policy is cooperation between entities within the community and with public officials. Only by working together will the community see the construction of new housing and on Parcel R-1, and the rehabilitation of property on Edinboro Street.

Promotion of Economic Development

In the next three years, the City can assist the Chinatown-South Cove community considerably with a minimum of investment simply by helping them to realize the full potential of the tourist industry. Measures needed are improved City services to make the area more attractive. Sidewalks lined with garbage awaiting collection, double parking, streets torn apart for utility work and inadequate street lighting all discourage tourists. The City should work with restauranteurs and their private trash collection service to eliminate the need for garbage to stand on the sidewalks. The City should also talk with the garment industry representatives to establish better loading zones and special hours for such activity so as not to interfere with commercial traffic. The City should require utility firms to synchronize their underground utility installations so that the streets need not be continually blocked for construction activity. The street lights are needed not just to assure tourists but also to insure the safety of residents in the community.

The tourist industry alone, however, will not be enough to improve the economic welfare of residents in Chinatown-South Cove. The City, through EDIC, should try to interest new firms, beneficial to the neighborhood, to locate in the area and to fill some of the partially vacant buildings. The City, in conjunction with the CEDC and garment industry representatives, should carry out a planning study to identify space needs of the garment industry and to prepare recommendations for consolidation to increase efficiency.

The City should continue to study the concept of recycling buildings in the Leather District not just to allow loft space for housing but with the idea of operating a total community with commercial, light manufacturing and residential uses.

The CEDC and the City should establish a job bank so that the best possible jobs are available to the Chinese community. The City should help to insure that community residents are considered for construction and permanent jobs on adjacent development sites especially Lafayette-Jordan Marsh and Park Plaza by requiring that job openings posted on the site be written in Chinese.

Residents of Chinatown-South Cove should be made aware of the Job Training Center which the City recently opened in South Boston. Through the Center's ongoing discussions with employers and unions, the Center's training programs are geared to those trades for which there are employment opportunities. Residents in Chinatown-South Cove who meet the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) eligibility requirements are being referred to the Job Training Center by the Multi-Service Center which is the neighborhood employment center in Chinatown.

The BRA and City should encourage Tufts-New England Medical Center to increase its community involvement and to expand education and job opportunities so that residents of Chinatown-South Cove are not confined to menial jobs. The Medical Center should also be encouraged to provide more sensitive and supportive health care to the community. The Chinese community too often does not use the health facilites offered by Tufts because clinic hours are incompatible with their work schedules, and hospitalization is frightening because of an alien diet, language problems and high cost. The Chinatown-South Cove community shows a high rate of infant mortality and tuberculosis as well as the degenerative conditions caused by inferior air quality. It is evident that physical proximity to the Medical Center does not necessarily improve the health of the community. In the long run, good health care can be another factor in upward mobility in the job market. The Medical Center should be made aware of its potential role in improving economic opportunities of its neighbors through more responsive health care.

The City must work closely with the CCBA, the Chinese Merchant's Association and the CEDC to encourage them in their efforts to launch new Chinese-American owned businesses since the establishment of these businesses could minimize the language barrier problems and, therefore, increase job opportunities for residents of the community. The City can provide technical assistance and consider tax agreements to encourage new businesses. Another joint CCBA, CEDC-City effort must be made in the area of language training. The old Quincy School, which has been turned over to the CCBA for community use, should have language training facilities. The merchants should be encouraged to relocate their language program into the old school so as to centralize services and to assist in paying the operating costs of the school.

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Roy Bishop, Director, Neighborhood Planning Program
Alice Boelter, Chinatown-South Cove Neighborhood Planner

4.

SOUTH COVE/CHINATOWN

FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to issues, strategies and 1977 Investment Program

ISSUE	STRATEGY	1977 INVESTMENT PROGRAM	PROPOSED 1978-1980 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
Encroachment by Downtown Development and Institutional Expansion	Downzone to less permissive category. Maximize use of existing space		Prepare planning study in cooperation with CEDC analyzing space needs of existing garment industry, vacant space available and possibilities for consolidation (CEIC).
	Discourage speculation within community by strengthening neighborhood	Gateway - $40,000 CD	Increase city services, e.g. street cleaning to demonstrate City's commitment to the continuation of the area as a residential neighborhood Require cooperation among utility companies in scheduling underground construction. Provide trash receptacles in business district Create landscaped area by the Gateway. Provide Business District Coordinator to plan needed improvements with merchants.
	Monitor new developments and Medical Center expansion.		Keep community informed of plan changes in Park Plaza and Lafayette-Jordan proposals. Work with Tufts on preparation of master plan.
	Consider expansion of Chinese community into Leather District		Review CEIC proposals for development and identify public policy tools to assist in implementation. Weigh proposals in light of other proposals from a city-wide perspective.
Limited Economic Opportunity	Support CEDC efforts to secure COC designation and to assist in formation of new businesses.		Work with CEDC/CDC on redevelopment proposals for Leather District
	Bring more businesses into neighborhood		Recruit non Chinese businesses to the area if they can use resident pool of labor (CEIC).
	Improve city services to encourage tourism		Work with restaurateurs to improve garbage collection so as to clean up sidewalks Provide permanent trash receptacles in Beach Street area Improve street sweeping on Beach Street Assign Business District Coordinator to assess district needs & suggest programs
	Encourage private developers and Medical Center to use city residents in new construction		Require contractors to prepare bilingual job postings on construction sites Require new businesses in Lafayette-Jordan Marsh & Park Plaza to prepare bilingual job postings on premises
	Increase language training opportunities		Encourage merchants to relocate language training program in the old Quincy School. Support CEDC/CDC efforts to secure funding for special language program
Housing Shortage	Develop comprehensive housing policy including preservation of stock, new construction and rental subsidies	Engineering Study for Edinboro Street housing renewal - $ 5,000 (CD)	Work with community CEOC/CDC to develop proposals for renovation of Edinboro Street property Develop financial incentives for absentee landlords to encourage rehabilitation. Analyze potential of Leather District as a new neighborhood Secure State and Federal subsidies to avoid displacement of tenants from rehabilitated buildings. Work with community to locate appropriate site for 100 bed nursing home.
	Analyze adverse environmental quality that impedes federal funding of new construction.		Work with CEDC to cite problems on a site by site basis and prepare recommendations for mitigating measures
	Encourage cooperation within the community to provide united effort in securing financial assistance.		
Quality of the Residential Environment	Improve City services Provide needed public improvements	South Cove Golden Age Center Supporting funds - $15,000 (CD) Street lighting on Harrison, Oxford and Edinboro St - $	Insure continuation of counseling services for Chinese community especially those with language problem Install new sidewalks on Beach Street. Improve pedestrian crossings - Kneeland Street
	Provide green spaces for passive and active recreation areas		Prepare plan for interim recreation area for Parcel R3/Rsa and seek funds for implementation. Involve community organizations in decision concerning facilities needed Improve access to Pagoda Park Seek funds to renovate Hudson-Beach Street area. Develop planting plan for a visual buffer to community from Mass Pike. Begin dialogue with Mass. Pike Officials.
	Complete urban renewal project activites	Sidewalk replacement, trees and lights on Hudson and Tyler in urban renewal area $160,420. Installation of poles and luminaires in urban renewal area - $56,000.	Secure funding for remaining street, sidewalk sewer and water work needed on Kneeland, Harrison, Tyler, Hudson and Harvard Streets.